

00093

1954/12/13

John Lansdale

~~SECRET~~

13 December 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR AMBASSADOR COLLINS

1. Have been trying all day long, using most of my team, to track down local means of contacting folks out in the country who could answer some of the questions you asked me this morning. For the first time, we are unable to locate anyone. Everyone so far has moved away from normal circles, leaving word he had moved from Saigon. Has me baffled for the moment. Will keep digging, both Cao Dai and Hoa Hao.

2. Suggest it might be helpful to trot out the former plan to call nationalist leaders together for a personal talk, at least for another look at it. Thought would be that you could tell them that the U.S. wants to help in creating a strong government, does not want to deal in personalities, prefers to deal in principles or ideals, but since leadership was systematically eliminated by the Vietminh, there are few leaders left and the U.S. would like to see every leader who is competent placed into position to serve the Vietnamese in the government...yet every time a name is suggested, there is strong opposition. Personally, I would like to hear you tell them you recognize the peril they actually face, the urgent need for unity, a brief program which many national leaders have been thinking about (we could draft it up), and ask these leaders to agree, in writing, to such a brief program...as a basis to start unifying against the enemy.

Ed
EDWARD G LANSDALE
Colonel USAF



~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority MND 809053

By HP NLE Date 2-25-87